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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 22, 2015

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Baker: "Opioid Addiction is a Health Care Issue"

Administration targets serious reforms to combat opioid epidemic



BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker today joined Attorney General Maura Healey, Health and Human Services (HHS) Marylou Sudders and members of the Governor's Working Group to announce recommendations aimed at eradicating opioid abuse. Their findings include short and long term action items to be implemented between now and over the next three years, some requiring legislative action and

others needing partnerships with federal leaders.

**Governor Baker, Attorney General Healey, HHS Secretary Sudders
Press Briefing Room, Massachusetts State House
June 22, 2015**

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[Click here to read the Working Group's Action Plan and full report.](#)

Transcription:

AD: Liz was fun and smart and beautiful. She started experimenting, doing pills, and then fell into a different crowd. I did not know about opioids... and she died Thursday.

JANICE MCGRORY: All of those with this disease matter. My daughter Liz still matters. And all who have died still matter.

GOVERNOR BAKER: Opioid addiction is a health care issue that knows no boundaries across age, race, class, or demographics. Today after many months of hard work, I'm pleased to join Attorney General Maura Healey, Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders, and the members in the front two rows here of our 18-member Working Group to release a host of recommendations to address and combat the opioid epidemic that is plaguing our communities. They worked tirelessly over the course of the past few months to aggregate data, share information, research and seek input from multiple regions of the Commonwealth to paint the most accurate and detailed picture of what the crisis looks like right here and now in the Commonwealth.

ATTORNEY GENERAL HEALEY: There's a reason why this needs to be a priority for all of us, because as the Governor said we are in the midst of a tremendous public health crisis. The United States is less than five percent of the world's population, but we consume 80 percent of its opioids. Today's report is important. It will serve as a roadmap for how we can come together to address this crisis and get people the help that they need. As hard as the work has been to get here, now the real hard work now begins: the work of implementing these recommendations.

SECRETARY SUDDERS: The Governor's action plan focuses on prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery. First, as you've heard, we must educate our youth and parents about the potential danger of opioid use and misuse. Second, we must ensure that our prescribers have the tools and best information available for safe prescribing. Third, we know that those who become addicted to opioids will

open medicine cabinets to feed their addictions. While our local communities and police departments have stepped up with drop boxes and take-back days, we must do more, and we will partner with pharmacies to pilot drug take-back programs. Fourth, real-time data is essential to track hotspots. Partnering with law enforcement, we will improve the timely reporting of state overdose death data, and we will use that data to target our treatment interventions.

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